



Re: questions from AP - Follow up  
Rubinkam, Michael to: Terri-A White

03/12/2012 02:35 PM

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA,

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Many thanks!

**Michael Rubinkam** | Northeastern Pa. correspondent

**AP**

Work: 610-530-5791  
Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)  
Twitter: [michaelrubinkam](https://twitter.com/michaelrubinkam)  
From: Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>  
Date: Mon, 12 Mar 2012 14:34:08 -0400  
To: Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
Subject: Re: questions from AP - Follow up

Still not sure, Mike. Will let you know if I hear something definite. -- Terri

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA  
Date: 03/12/2012 12:26 PM  
Subject: Re: questions from AP - Follow up

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Hi Terri,  
Just checking in. Do you think it'll be this week? For my planning purposes.  
Thanks,  
Mike

**Michael Rubinkam** | Northeastern Pa. correspondent

**AP**

Work: 610-530-5791  
Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)  
Twitter: [michaelrubinkam](https://twitter.com/michaelrubinkam)

**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>  
**Date:** Tue, 6 Mar 2012 17:12:21 -0500  
**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: questions from AP - Follow up

I don't, Mike. Your recent article prompted numerous inquiries from other reporters. Here's our official statement. I'll be sure to get the publicly releasable results to you as soon as they come out. --  
Terri

"EPA expects to begin receiving validated results of water samples from labs in the near future. Once that information is received we will determine next steps in coordination with the state, with the first important step being sharing relevant information with homeowners. Once we have notified the homeowners, we will share a summary of the information with the interested public."

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA  
Date: 03/06/2012 05:08 PM  
Subject: Re: questions from AP - Follow up

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Hi Terri,  
Just checking in to see whether you got a solid answer yet on the timing of the test results.  
Thanks,  
Mike

Michael Rubinkam | Northeastern Pa. correspondent

**AP**

Work: 610-530-5791

Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)

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**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>  
**Date:** Mon, 5 Mar 2012 10:58:00 -0500  
**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: questions from AP - Follow up

Hi Mike,

Thought it would begin this week; now looks like next. As soon as I get a solid answer, I'll reach out to you. -- Terri  
Sent by EPA Wireless E-Mail Services

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**From:** "Rubinkam, Michael" [[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)]  
**Sent:** 03/05/2012 03:48 PM GMT  
**To:** Terri-A White  
**Subject:** Re: questions from AP - Follow up

Good morning Terri,  
Wanted to follow up with you on the Dimock test results. Want to make sure I understand you on the timing. Does EPA expect to be able to share resultswith individual homeowners this week? If so, which day? Would you be able to share summaries with me?  
Thanks for all.  
Mike

Michael Rubinkam | Northeastern Pa. correspondent



Work: 610-530-5791

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**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>

**Date:** Fri, 24 Feb 2012 18:08:50 -0500

**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

**Subject:** Re: questions from AP - Follow up

you're welcome. Enjoy your weekend, too!

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA

Cc: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA

Date: 02/24/2012 05:56 PM

Subject: Re: questions from AP - Follow up

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Thank you, Terri. Have a great weekend.

**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>

**Date:** Fri, 24 Feb 2012 16:45:49 -0500

**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

**Cc:** <[seneca.roy@epa.gov](mailto:seneca.roy@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: questions from AP - Follow up

Mike,

Here are responses to your follow-up questions.

#### Re #1

**Question:** Is that the sole action being contemplated by EPA at this time — the provision of water to additional residents if the testing shows they need it?

Answer: Yes, EPA's sole priority right now is to ensure safe drinking water to affected residents.

**Question:** Would EPA pay for that water?

Answer: Yes, EPA would pay for the water, as we are now for four homes, if we determine it is warranted.

**Question:** And what's the end game, both with respect to the four houses already receiving replacement water and to any houses added to the list -- I assume that's not a permanent fix.

Answer: Our objective is to provide protection in the short term, and we will later evaluate any long term solutions that may be needed.

#### Re #2

**Question: I understand that EPA has not yet determined the cause, but my question is whether EPA is *attempting* to determine the cause as part of its inquiry. Or is EPA's sole reason for being in Dimock to assess drinking water quality — as you suggest in answer #7 -- without attempting to pinpoint the cause of any pollution that is found?**

Answer: As previously noted, EPA's sole priority right now is to ensure safe drinking water to affected residents.

**Question: By my calculations, the first test results could be in as early as next week. Five weeks from week of Jan. 22 = week of Jan. 26. Is that accurate?**

Answer: We expect to begin getting validated results of water samples during the week of March 4. Once we get those results, we will assemble data packages that we will share with the homeowners. We won't be able to disclose the locations of our sampling results, but we hope to assemble summary information that we will share with interested parties

**Re #6**

**Question: Can you tell me which operators in Washington County you are focusing on? And was your investigation in Washington County prompted by a complaint or complaints? Can you share the results of these inspections?**

Answer: Currently, EPA is assessing the findings of its multi-media inspections in Washington County. We do not provide the names of facilities or information about an investigation until its complete. Washington County was chosen because there is a significant amount of oil and natural gas development occurring there. While natural gas operators employ various safeguards to minimize the risks inherent to the industry, legitimate concerns have emerged regarding potential environmental impacts.

**Re #7**

**Question: Michael Krancer has been very clear that he believes EPA is overstepping its authority. I'd ask you again to address my question: Does EPA believe Pa. DEP is doing an inadequate job with respect to protecting the environment from gas drilling impacts?**

Answer: State and federal agencies have critical, complementary roles in ensuring that shale gas extraction occurs safely. States have important front-line responsibilities in permitting natural gas extraction, and we respect and support their efforts. But EPA, likewise, has important oversight responsibilities and acts as a critical backstop when public health or the environment may be at risk. We intend to exercise this authority prudently and sparingly.

**Question: And one additional question: I heard yesterday from an industry official that EPA is active in several other Pennsylvania counties with Marcellus Shale operations. Can you confirm that and give me the details — what counties, what are you doing in those counties, and what have you found?**

Three Pennsylvania counties -- Bradford, Susquehanna, and Washington -- are among several locations across the country where EPA is conducting a national study of potential impacts to drinking water from hydraulic fracturing. The national study is separate from the work EPA Region 3 is conducting in Dimock and the inspections done in Washington County.

Details about the hydraulic fracturing case studies <http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/casestudies.html>

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA  
Cc: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA  
Date: 02/23/2012 08:48 AM  
Subject: Re: questions from AP

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Terri,

Thanks for these answers. A few follow-up questions:

Re #1, is that the sole action being contemplated by EPA at this time — the provision of water to additional residents if the testing shows they need it? Would EPA pay for that water? And what's the end game, both with respect to the four houses already receiving replacement water and to any houses added to the list -- I assume that's not a permanent fix.

Re #2, I understand that EPA has not *yet* determined the cause, but my question is whether EPA is *attempting* to determine the cause as part of its inquiry. Or is EPA's sole reason for being in Dimock to assess drinking water quality — as you suggest in answer #7 -- without attempting to pinpoint the cause of any pollution that is found?

Re #6, can you tell me which operators in Washington County you are focusing on? And was your investigation in Washington County prompted by a complaint or complaints? Can you share the results of these inspections?

Re #7, Michael Krancer has been very clear that he believes EPA is overstepping its authority. I'd ask you again to address my question: Does EPA believe Pa. DEP is doing an inadequate job with respect to protecting the environment from gas drilling impacts?

And one additional question: I heard yesterday from an industry official that EPA is active in several other Pennsylvania counties with Marcellus Shale operations. Can you confirm that and give me the details — what counties, what are you doing in those counties, and what have you found?

Thanks,

Mike

Michael Rubinkam  
[IMAGE]  
Correspondent/Northeastern Pa.  
5050 Tilghman St., Suite 115  
Allentown, PA 18104  
610-530-5791 (w)  
Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)  
Twitter: michaelrubinkam

**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>  
**Date:** Wed, 22 Feb 2012 16:20:18 -0500  
**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
**Cc:** <[seneca.roy@epa.gov](mailto:seneca.roy@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: questions from AP

Mike,

I've taken your questions and pasted them in this email. Below each question is an EPA response. --  
Terri

Hi Terri,

As you know, I observed the EPA investigation in Dimock last week. I have some questions:

1. The EPA said in its news release that it is sampling residents' water to "further assess whether any residents are being exposed to hazardous substances that cause health concerns." What will the agency do if it finds hazardous substances in additional wells? It's vital that I be able to answer this question.

**EPA's priority is to ensure safe drinking water to affected residents. EPA will evaluate the data and determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether alternate water should be provided. The individual decisions are based on the presence of hazardous substances and our assessment of the potential for health concerns using accepted regulatory and health based screening levels.**

2. Will this sampling allow EPA to make a determination as to how the substances got in the water, and who is to blame for putting them there?

**At this time, EPA has not done any detailed review to determine the cause. Our focus is first and foremost on the drinking water quality of residents.**

3. What are the classes of substances that EPA is testing for (e.g. VOCs, metals)?

**EPA's Jan. 19 action memo provides more specifics on what EPA is testing for. You can find it on EPA's website at:**

**<http://www.epaossc.org/sites/7555/files/Dimock%20Action%20Memo%2001-19-12.PDF>**

4. I'd ask you to respond to Cabot's assertions about EPA and the data points that EPA used to justify its action in Dimock:

[http://www.cabotog.com/pdfs/Cabot\\_Statement\\_EPAWaterDelivery.pdf](http://www.cabotog.com/pdfs/Cabot_Statement_EPAWaterDelivery.pdf)

Cabot's objection to the EPA investigation is summed up by this line:

"It appears that EPA selectively chose data on substances it was concerned about in order to reach a result it had predetermined. EPA chose to include specific data points without adequate knowledge or consideration of where or why the samples were collected, when they were taken, or the naturally occurring background levels for those substances throughout the Susquehanna County area. The end result is an unwarranted investigation and unnecessary delivery of water."

**EPA issued the following statement on Jan. 26 in response to Cabot's assertions:**

**EPA is in this community sampling and providing water as a direct result of requests from Dimock residents. Our priority is the health of the people there, and our actions are guided entirely by science and the law. We are providing water to a handful of households because data developed by Cabot itself provides evidence that they are being exposed to hazardous substances at levels of health concern. We are conducting monitoring as a prudent step to investigate these concerns and develop a sound scientific basis for assessing the need for further action. This is consistent with steps we would take in any situation where we are presented with potential health risks to citizens under the federal laws we are charged to carry out.**

**In his State of the Union address, President Obama made clear that he is committed to tapping America's natural gas as part of a new era in American energy. He also affirmed our commitment to "developing this resource without putting the health and safety of our citizens at risk."**

**We have been clear that if we see an immediate threat to public health, we will not hesitate to take steps under the law to protect Americans whose health may be at risk. The Agency also welcomes PADEP and Cabot's participation in the sampling. Without a doubt, EPA's samples will be collected and reviewed using the highest scientific standards and we will take into account all other relevant and reliable data developed by PADEP and Cabot. The residents in Dimock deserve answers based on the facts, and we look forward to working together to meet our responsibility to this community.**

5. When do you expect to have the first results?

**Once a home is sampled, we expect to have quality-assured lab results for that particular home approximately five weeks later. The first samples were taken during the week of Jan. 22.**

6. What exactly is EPA doing in Washington County?

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/12044/1209896-503-0.stm>

**See #7 Response**

7. Between Dimock and Washington County, it appears EPA is ramping up its investigations in Pennsylvania. Does EPA believe Pa. DEP is doing an inadequate job? As I understand it, the state agency has primary jurisdiction and responsibility for enforcing federal environmental laws. If you believe DEP is performing as it should, then why are these investigations necessary? Are they simply duplicative?

**EPA is in the Dimock community sampling and providing water as a direct result of requests from Dimock residents and based on monitoring data, developed largely by Cabot, that led us to conclude that there were health concerns that required action. Our actions in Dimock reflect our longstanding responsibility under federal environmental laws to address threats to public health, and are guided entirely by science and the law. The Dimock investigation is focused solely on water quality in residential wells.**

**In Washington County, Pa., EPA has conducted inspections at active industrial operations including well pads and compressor stations. These inspections were done as part of our multi-media enforcement program, which develops comprehensive approaches to address complex and emerging environmental problems. Multi-media inspections are conducted in various industrial sectors to determine their compliance with multiple federal environmental laws including for air, water and hazardous waste.**

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>  
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA  
Date: 02/22/2012 11:59 AM  
Subject: Re: questions from AP

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Thanks very much.

**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>  
**Date:** Wed, 22 Feb 2012 11:45:25 -0500

**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

**Subject:** Re: questions from AP

Mike,

Should have responses later today. -- Terri

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**From:** "Rubinkam, Michael" <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

**To:** Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA

**Date:** 02/22/2012 11:36 AM

**Subject:** Re: questions from AP

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Hi Terri,

Just checking in to see how it's coming.

Thanks,

Mike

Michael Rubinkam

[IMAGE]

Correspondent/Northeastern Pa.

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Allentown, PA 18104

610-530-5791 (w)

Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)

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**From:** Terri-A White <[White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov)>

**Date:** Mon, 20 Feb 2012 11:32:10 -0500

**To:** Associated Press <[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)>

**Subject:** Re: questions from AP

Hi Mike,

Our office is closed today for the holiday. I'll start on getting answers when I'm back to work tomorrow. -- Terri

Sent by EPA Wireless E-Mail Services

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**From:** "Rubinkam, Michael" [[mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)]

**Sent:** 02/20/2012 04:03 PM GMT

**To:** Terri-A White

**Cc:** Trish Taylor; David Polish

**Subject:** questions from AP

Hi Terri,

As you know, I observed the EPA investigation in Dimock last week. I have some questions:

1. The EPA said in its news release that it is sampling residents' water to "further assess whether any residents are being exposed to hazardous substances that cause health concerns." What will the agency do if it finds



hazardous substances in additional wells? It's vital that I be able to answer this question.

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3. What are the classes of substances that EPA is testing for (e.g. VOCs, metals)?

4. I'd ask you to respond to Cabot's assertions about EPA and the data points that EPA used to justify its action in Dimock:

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5. When do you expect to have the first results?

6. What exactly is EPA doing in Washington County?

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/12044/1209896-503-0.stm>

7. Between Dimock and Washington County, it appears EPA is ramping up its investigations in Pennsylvania. Does EPA believe Pa. DEP is doing an inadequate job? As I understand it, the state agency has primary jurisdiction and responsibility for enforcing federal environmental laws. If you believe DEP is performing as it should, then why are these investigations necessary? Are they simply duplicative?

Many thanks,  
Mike

Michael Rubinkam  
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Allentown, PA 18104  
610-530-5791 (w)  
Email: [mrubinkam@ap.org](mailto:mrubinkam@ap.org)  
Twitter: michaelrubinkam

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